

3) *One fears that one's enemy will spread malicious rumours about oneself*

Further, there is the worry that the people we dislike will harm us verbally. They may talk behind our back, spread malicious rumours and damage our reputation. This in turn may result in us losing our job, our friends, etc.

4) *One dreads death*

Even though we do not worry much about death when we are young, as we grow older and come closer to the end of our life, the prospect of death can become a source of great anguish. Especially when our life is spent in engaging in harmful and meaningless activities, the mere thought of death may lead to much sorrow and misery.

5) *One fears that due to one's non-Dharmic activities, one will be reborn in suffering existences*

If we have some understanding that the actions we have accumulated in this life may bear fruit in future existences and if we have accumulated a lot harmful actions we will be possessed by the fear of our future rebirths.

Besides these five points there is also the suffering of encountering other problems such as facing poverty, having to work a job one does not enjoy, being resented by others, having an unattractive body, and so forth.

**The suffering of the separation from what is pleasant**

This type of suffering is illustrated by five points in relation to the pain of being separated from the people we love and cherish:

- 1) When one is separated from one's loved ones, grief arises in the mind
- 2) When one is separated from one's loved ones, one verbally laments
- 3) When one is separated from one's loved ones, one harms one's own body
- 4) One becomes sad when one remembers and yearns for the qualities of the departed
- 5) (There is the suffering of) no longer enjoying what one has lost

1) *When one is separated from one's loved ones, grief arises in the mind*

There are some people, such as a close friend, a spouse, a child, a teacher etc. that are so dear to us that we cannot bear to be apart from them even for a short time. However, one day we will definitely have to permanently separate from them, which (unless our own death is the cause of the separation) will cause us to experience great sorrow and grief.

The **Bases of Discipline** says:

*The end of accumulated things is depletion.*

*The end of things that are high is a fall.*

*The end of meetings is separation.*

*The end of life is death.*

2) *When one is separated from one's loved ones, one verbally laments*

When we feel extremely miserable and distressed due to the separation from a loved one, we may not be able to control our emotions and verbally express our grief by crying, mourning, lamenting and wailing.

3) *When one is separated from one's loved ones, one harms one's own body*

In some cases the separation from someone we love, may cause us to feel so desperate and unhappy that we physically harm ourselves. We may stop eating and sleeping, adopt a very risky life-style, and eventually even attempt to kill ourselves.

If we do not actively harm ourselves the grief may weaken our immune system and make us susceptible to various kinds of disease.

4) *One becomes sad when one remembers and yearns for the qualities of the departed*

Time and again we remember the qualities of the departed and yearn for being able to be with them. We dream about meeting them only to wake up to the painful reality that this is impossible. Our memories of those we have lost become the source of suffering and we need to repress the mere thought of them in order to be able to get through the day.

5) *(There is the suffering of) no longer enjoying what one has lost*

The absence of our loved ones has created a great void and it is extremely difficult to fill that void.

In fact we may never be able to get over the separation and thus never be able to experience the same kind of joy we used to experience.

Furthermore, there is the suffering of, for instance, losing one's attractive body or one's intelligence through an accident, of losing one's job, of being robbed of one's possessions, and so forth.

**The suffering of not getting what we want**

Regarding this type of suffering, Lama Tsongkhapa says in his *Lam Rim Chenmo (Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment)* that there are again five points to contemplate which are similar to the five points of the *suffering of the separation from what is pleasant*.

Again here we should reflect on our personal experiences, i.e. on times when we suffered because we did not get what we want.

In the course of our life we have numerous dreams and aspirations which, when unfulfilled, oftentimes end in disappointment. We may desire to be wealthy, popular, successful, famous, respected, and loved. We may wish for a specific job, a relationship, an education, and so forth, and work extremely hard to achieve those goals. However, if in the end we fail, we feel sad and depressed. In fact, the stronger our desire is to obtain something, the greater is our misery and suffering when we do not succeed.

**The suffering of (having) the five aggregates**

The Buddha said: "In brief, the five contaminated aggregates are suffering." Here the Buddha means that the five contaminated aggregates are in the *nature* of suffering. This is explained in five points:

- 1) The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of future suffering
- 2) The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of present suffering
- 3) The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of the suffering of suffering
- 4) The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of the suffering of change
- 5) The five (contaminated) aggregates are in the nature of the all-pervasive compositional suffering

1) *The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of future suffering*

The five contaminated aggregates are vessels of future suffering because due to our present contaminated mind and body we create the causes for future misery. Having a body and a mind that is under the control of ignorance and other delusions we constantly accumulate negative actions of body, speech, and mind that induce problems and difficulties in the later part of this life or in future rebirths. As explained previously, due to our present five aggregates we experience feelings of suffering which induce anger (resentment, hostility, hatred, etc.), we experience feelings of contaminated happiness which induce attachment (desire, longing, craving, etc.) and we experience contaminated neutral feelings which induce ignorance (misperceptions that misapprehend reality). Anger, attachment, and ignorance in turn cause us to engage in harmful actions (karma) which eventually ripen into various types of problems and difficulties.

2) *The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of suffering that presently exists*

The five contaminated aggregates are also responsible for us *presently* experiencing various troubles and discomforts. Due to having our current mind and body we experience the problems of sickness, aging and death. We face all sorts of difficulties, frustration and dissatisfaction. When afflictive emotions that induce future suffering arise we immediately lose our peace of mind and feel disturbed and restless.

3) *The five (contaminated) aggregates are vessels of the suffering of suffering*

Regarding the five contaminated aggregates being the vessel for the three types of suffering, our present mind and body are the vessels that experience the various types of suffering of suffering, i.e. the physical suffering of cold, heat, pain, exhaustion, etc. as well as the mental suffering of sadness, depression, loneliness, anxiety, etc.

